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THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

WHAT IS OBJECTIVE RELATIVISM?

IN his review of L. W. Beck's *Philosophic Inquiry*, Virgil Aldrich describes Beck's general position as "the spittin' image of Dewey's, couched at times in the vocabulary of objective relativism and of Murphy's *The Uses of Reason*." He also identifies objective relativism with "critical naturalism."[1] Aldrich's use of the name is only one of many it has received since A. E. Murphy coined it in 1927. Characteristically, these uses have presupposed agreement on the meaning of "objective relativism." Aldrich's use is no exception.

Aldrich's identification of objective relativism with Dewey and philosophic naturalism is also a characteristic use of the name. Whitehead and E. B. McGilvary are two other figures often identified as objective relativists, usually because of their critiques of bifurcation.[2] On the other hand, it is common to encounter references to "objective relativism" and "objective relativists" without further identification of the philosophies or philosophers being referred to. Here Beck himself is no exception.

But the application of the name seems to know no bounds. Witness J. H. Randall's recent identification of the "very suggestive statement of objective relativism in science" with Berkeley's *Siris* and *De Motu*.[3] Or Shirk's association of objective relativism with Alfred Lloyd's "Adenturous Idealism."[4] Recently Clyde Kluckhohn referred to objective relativism as his belief in the possibility

[1] This JOURNAL, Vol. LIII, No. 17, August 16, 1956, pp. 533–534.

[2] Although often called an objective relativist, it is questionable whether Murphy would so identify himself. But this might be said of many who were so named. After the many times he had been tagged an objective relativist, Dewey used the term only once or twice to my knowledge. Those other two notorious objective relativists—A. N. Whitehead and E. B. McGilvary—never did mention the name in their writings as far as I can determine.

[3] J. H. Randall, Jr., in reviews of Berkeley's *Philosophical Writings*, this JOURNAL, Vol. LII, No. 9, April 28, 1955, p. 248, and S. P. Lamprecht's *Our Philosophical Traditions*, this JOURNAL, Vol. LIII, No. 4, February 16, 1956, p. 173.

[4] Evelyn Urban Shirk, *Adventurous Idealism; The Philosophy of Alfred Lloyd* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1952), p. 221; also p. 156.

of more objectivity in the study of cultures than had been thought possible in the "radical cultural relativity" of earlier studies.[5] Ernest Nagel added to this "ordinary usage" when he identified the contextualistic naturalism to which he adheres ("America's most significant contribution to philosophic intelligence") as a position variously designated "objective relativism, functional realism, contextualism, naturalism, and process philosophy," pointing out further that its "central conceptions" of man and nature had sometimes been identified with the pragmatism or instrumentalism of Peirce, James, Mead, and Dewey.[6]

As a matter of fact, objective relativism has been identified with a host of philosophers and philosophies. At first it was most often linked with "naive," "direct," "presentational," "neo-," "naturalistic" or "natural," or "perspective" realism. Sellars once called it a "half-hearted qualification of neo-realism," singling out thinkers "like Whitehead and Murphy" who had fallen back upon it "in despair" to avoid the difficulties in the naive position of neo-realism.[7] And there is Lovejoy's famous identification of objective relativism as the second phase of the "revolt against dualism" (the first being neo-realism).[8] Other writers have associated or directly identified objective relativism with Relativity Theory, the objectivity of relations, philosophical relativism, pluralism, and the critique of bifurcation. Hahn suggested that "objective relativism is far from being a single specific doctrine or set of doctrines," but rather contains "within its ample domain a host of differing views."[9]

Little wonder, then, that Pratt should suggest that objective

[5] Clyde Kluckhohn, "Ethical Relativity: *Sic Et Non*," this JOURNAL, Vol. LII, No. 23, November 10, 1955, p. 675.

[6] Ernest Nagel, *Sovereign Reason* (Glencoe, Free Press, 1954), p. 53. Nagel points out that the identification with pragmatism should be limited to the historical roots of contextualistic naturalism. Pragmatism is the matrix out of which it has emerged. Nagel is correct in identifying objective relativism as an American contribution. Very little use of the term has been made in connection with non-American philosophers.

[7] R. W. Sellars, *The Philosophy of Physical Realism* (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1932), p. 65.

[8] A. O. Lovejoy, *The Revolt Against Dualism; An Inquiry Concerning the Existence of Ideas* (Chicago, The Open Court Publishing Co., 1930), Ch. 3.

[9] L. E. Hahn, "A Contextualistic Theory of Perception," in *University of California Publications in Philosophy* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1942), XXII, p. 6. How ample is the domain is indicated when Hahn calls the roll (in part): Murphy, Morris, Lamprecht, Lenzen, Marhenke, Piatt, H. C. Brown, Burtt, Swabey, Dewey, Whitehead, and Mead. Their agreement rests in a "common revolt against the traditional dualism" more than in their respective programs for replacing it, he claims.

relativism might be little more than a proposal for a new terminology in which the prefix "ob" would be substituted for the prefix "sub."[10] Murphy himself, some ten years afterward, cast doubt upon the legitimacy of the child he had baptized—and on the baptism itself—when he noted that philosophizing in America had become too much a matter of defending positions instead of adding substantially to our knowledge, and that if one did not like any of the traditional "isms" there was "always a possible new one, 'objective relativism,' for example, to enliven the discussion."[11]

If the name is applied to those philosophies that are in "common revolt against the traditional dualism," then objective relativism goes back at least to Spinoza. If it is applied (as it sometimes is) to not only anti-dualistic but non-dualistic philosophies as well, then objective relativism goes back to the Pre-Socratics and writers of the Old Testament. Certainly the widespread use the name has received is the result of just such an application. This, however, has tended to obscure something more important about objective relativism: its alternative theory (or theories) to bifurcation. The possibility of there being more than one such theory has added to the confusion. But a greater source of confusion, one which has undoubtedly most influenced subsequent writers on the subject, is Murphy's own writings on objective relativism. The alternative theory Murphy saw in the objective relativism of Dewey and Whitehead is ambiguously set forth in these writings, and later writers have reflected the ambiguity.

It is the intention of this paper to point out this ambiguity and to attempt to identify the unique nature of objective relativism as an alternative to bifurcation, basing the identification on what Murphy called its "most original and most controversial" element.[12]

II

Although Murphy said that "objective relativism" was the name of "the common tendency" in Dewey and Whitehead to unite "as prophets of the new gospel," he also gave the name to that new gospel. Negatively, the new gospel was a critique of bifurcation. Positively, it was "an alternative theory grounded upon the ulti-

[10] J. B. Pratt, *Personal Realism* (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1937), p. 183.

[11] A. E. Murphy, "The Fruits of Critical Realism," this JOURNAL, Vol. XXXIV, No. 11, May 27, 1937, pp. 291–292.

[12] Professor Murphy has indicated an interest in returning to this subject. His conclusions would be most pertinent to this question and the writer takes this opportunity to urge Professor Murphy to undertake his proposed restudy of the problem.

macy of the relative."[13] The name "objective relativism" suggests both the critique and the alternative theory, and the constituent terms of the name indicate the "most original and most controversial" aspect of the new gospel:

> It attempts to unite two propositions which have uniformly been taken to be incompatible. (a) The objective facts of the world and of reality are the very 'apparent' and relative happenings directly disclosed to us in perception. (b) In spite (or because) of such objectivity such happenings remain ultimately and inescapably relative. Such relativity is hence an ultimate fact about the objective world.[14]

At least two questions are in order: (1) What does "in spite (or because) of such objectivity" mean? and (2) Relative to what? The way in which these questions are answered determines the meaning of Murphy's two propositions and, therefore, the meaning of "objective relativism" itself. But nowhere in his writings does Murphy indicate that these questions needed asking.

When we ask what the "very 'apparent' and relative happenings directly disclosed to us in perception" are relative to, we can find in Murphy's writings at least two answers. At times he says such happenings are relative to *one another*. Here the incompatibility he speaks of presumably would be the incompatibility of being objective and being related. But at other times Murphy says such happenings are relative to *mind* or a *perceiver*. In this case, the incompatibility would be traditional incompatibility of objectivity and subjectivity. (A further complicating factor arises in the use of such terms as "perceiver" and "organism" when relativity to the body and relativity to the mind are not distinguished.) It is obvious that these are two quite different answers, and that quite different consequences follow from saying "happenings" are related to one another, and saying they are related to a mind or perceiver. But both answers are found in Murphy's writings. Thus some writers were led to identify objective relativism with a theory of the world as related or interrelated, or with a view of the objectivity or objective reality of relations. Other writers, however, identified it with a relativity to mind, or philosophical relativism. The first identification I propose to call *relatedness*, and the second identification I will call *relativism*. Actually, as will be seen, both are elements in—though not equally unique to—objective relativism.

[13] A. E. Murphy, "Objective Relativism in Dewey and Whitehead," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2, March, 1927, p. 125.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

Here is a statement of *relatedness* by Murphy:

> An occurrence is red in one relation, blue in another. The same event is here and there, now and then, and naturally so. The fact is not comprehensible apart from its relations, and there is no reason why it should be. For relatedness is of the very essence of a world of events, of interaction.[15]

And here is a statement of *relativism* by Dewey:

> That an individual, possessed by some mode and degree of organized unity, participates in the genesis of every experienced situation, whether it be an object or an activity, is evident. That the way in which it is engaged affects the quality of the situation experienced is evident. That the way in which it is engaged has consequences that modify not merely the environment but which react to modify the active agent; that every form of life in the higher organisms constantly conserves some consequences of its prior experiences, is also evident. The constancy and pervasiveness of the operative presence of the self as a determining factor in all situations is the chief reason why we give so little heed to it. . . . Only in pathological cases, in delusions and insanities and social eccentricities, do we readily become aware of it. . . . Yet till we understand operations of the self as the tool of tools, *the* means in all use of means . . . science is incomplete and the use made of it is at the mercy of an unknown factor. . . .[16]

When Murphy says "such relativity is hence an ultimate fact about the objective world," he seems to be referring to *relatedness*. Again, he notes that the "misnamed 'theory of relativity'" furnishes another instance of the combination of objectivity and relativity. If that theory proves anything, he says, it proves space and time are ultimately relative, not to mind, but to a given reference system.[17] And finally, Murphy tells us that "the foundation of the whole affair" (i.e., objective relativism) is an "inversion in the relation of objects and events."[18] Traditionally, events have been the characters of objects, and objects have been considered substantive and primary. Because of the assumed incompatibility of the objective and relative, however, no alternative to this notion was thought possible. Thus objective reality is assumed to be complete in itself,

> and the fact of happening, of occurrence in a given situation or context, is extrinsic to it. . . . The theory we are considering transposes this relationship. For it the event is substantive and objects are characters of events.

[15] A. E. Murphy, "Substance and Substantive," in *University of California Publications in Philosophy* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1927), Vol. IX, p. 83.

[16] John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (Chicago, The Open Court Publishing Co., 1926), pp. 246–247.

[17] Murphy, "Objective Relativism," p. 123.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

> Thus relatedness, in all its complexity and interconnection, is made basic for the objective world.[19]

Any doubt that Murphy is referring to *relatedness* (and not *relativism*) is dispelled when he points out that the consequences of this inversion are the same for Whitehead and for Dewey: the interrelatedness of the world, and context and process. Thus the inversion is expressed by Dewey in terms of context, and by Whitehead in terms of perspectives:

> The relatedness which a perspective sums up and the centeredness to which it bears witness are facts about the world, and basic facts. For they express the very interaction of existing events which is the stuff of reality. . . . [objective relativism] affirms and expresses precisely such interaction. The fact of relativity is here no other than the fact of relatedness.[20]

But Murphy gives another answer to the question, Relative to what? He has identified perspective, relatedness, and interaction with relativity, as well as context.[21] For Whitehead, "significance is the relatedness of things," and this, Murphy claims, is Dewey's contextualism. Both view the conditions and basis of meaning as the fact of relatedness or interaction. No quality, then, in and by itself is a meaning. Meaning, he says, is an "objective natural fact." Note that Murphy means here that relatedness or interaction as the basis and condition of meaning is a relatedness or interaction independent (at times, at least) of relatedness or interaction with mind or a perceiver. But then he brings in the "organism":

> [Characters] belong to the given event in a context and their occurrence is significant of that context. They mean an external world because they are qualities of the world in its relation to the organism, they belong in that relation.[22]

Dewey is cited in support: Qualities have reference or meaning because they never were in the organism in the first place, but were always of interaction; as much qualities of things as of organisms. It isn't clear in Murphy's reference to "organism" whether he has in mind the body of the organism, or the mind, or both. He does appear to restrict the relativity to the body. Adjectives or meanings, he claims, may belong to events without reference to mind; there are adjectives independent of relation to human beings but not independent of some relatedness.[23] Whichever it is, this is certainly different from a relatedness between events.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 126.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 132.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 135.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 137.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 137n.

Murphy claims that Dewey was not content to merely recognize the relativity of meaning to a context; he persistently made it relative to a ***human*** context. For Murphy this meant Dewey was

> taking one class of objects, namely, those which function in human use and activity directly, as primarily and ultimately important. That all objects occur as meanings in the interaction of events is true enough. That the interaction must be social and relative to human use is another matter.[24]

Dewey's instrumentalist interpretation of science reflects this tendency, Murphy thinks, to treat scientific objects as relative not just to a ***natural*** (physical?) context, but also relative to ***human*** contexts as *tools*. "And this seems not true and certainly not consistent with the theory in question." Events, Murphy says, interact in other contexts than the human: like electrons. When this context is restricted to the human, a privileged context is set up. Murphy is ready to agree that only humans, perhaps, *use* meanings. But Dewey tends, Murphy thinks, to reduce meanings to the human context. This is the "anthropomorphic bias" in Dewey which, Murphy claims, may very well open the door to "an inevitable suggestion of 'idealism.'" And if Dewey's naturalism has been suspect, "this plainly is the reason."[25]

But it means something worse for Murphy: Dewey and Whitehead had not freed themselves "from the flesh-pots of bifurcation in a full and unambiguous way"—especially Dewey. In "bringing" mind back into nature they had tended to spread indiscriminately over the whole of nature a "bifurcated, arbitrary, and absolute 'human standpoint.'"[26] That is, since all events manifest a very definite sort of relativity to their context and conditions, all "must perforce be sentient in some general sense," for such relativity appears in human experience in the form of perspectives and in this special form presupposes "sentience," "apprehension," and the like. This extension of "the special feature of human relativity" to "nominally inanimate nature" is a result of the reaction to the old, dualistic view.[27]

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

[25] *Ibid*, pp. 142–143. By 1939, however, Murphy had switched his tune—or Dewey had lost his bias: "Mr. Dewey has no leanings toward animism or other such attempts to reduce the world to the human scale" (Murphy, "Dewey's Epistemology And Metaphysics," in P. A. Schilpp, ed., *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, New York, The Tudor Publishing Co., 1939, p. 223). Unfortunately we are not told what it is that led to this change.

[26] A. E. Murphy, "The Anti-Copernican Revolution," this JOURNAL, Vol. XXVI, No. 11, May 23, 1929, pp. 282–283.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 285.

It would seem, then, that Murphy wishes to restrict relativity to the organism to a relativity to the body of the organism but not the mind. Murphy identified Whitehead's relativity as interrelatedness, and Dewey's as context. But Dewey's context is always a human context. Hence, according to Murphy, Dewey's anthropomorphism, animism, and idealism. For Murphy context is no different from any other interrelatedness. But if context and interrelatedness are the same, and if context is human, then all interrelatedness is human. This is the outcome of Murphy's failure to distinguish relatedness and relativism. It is clear that Dewey had something more than interaction or interrelatedness in mind when he talked about context. Context included for Dewey what he called "background and selective interest."[28] And that aspect of context which he called "interest" is "known in philosophical terminology as the 'subjective,'" though it is not to be equated with the "ism" of subjectivism.[29] If Dewey were to extend context to include any and all cases of interaction or interrelatedness (as Murphy does when he identifies context and interrelatedness), then he would certainly be aware that it would not be a *human* context in all cases:

> Interest, as the subjective, is after all equivalent to individuality or uniqueness. There is no reason to limit its presence and operation to the organic and mental, although it is especially exemplified there. Everything which exists may be supposed to have its own unduplicated manner of acting and reacting. . . . It is not a part or constituent of subject-matter; but as a manner of action it selects subject-matter and leaves a qualitative impress upon it.[30]

Murphy continued to fail to distinguish between relatedness and relativism. Whitehead and Eddington are charged with animism for their mis-use of the analogy of human perspectives as a means of understanding the "physical meaning and status of relativity in all events."[31] Again, in a series on Alexander, Murphy pointed out how Alexander had established the objective relatedness of the world, with knowledge as a specific case of this relatedness. This was a major contribution, he thought, because knowledge had been an anomaly when seen to be itself quite clearly relative and yet in a world of absolutes. Knowledge is relative, yet we ought to know objects in themselves. "Either its relativity or its objective valid-

[28] John Dewey, "Context And Thought," in *University of California Publications in Philosophy* (Berkeley, The University of California Press, 1931), Vol. XII, pp. 212–213.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 216–217.

[31] Murphy, "The Anti-Copernican Revolution," p. 287.

ity must apparently be surrendered."[32] But what does Murphy mean by "relative" here? Does "knowledge is relative" mean knowledge is of things-in-relation, or perhaps of the relations themselves, or does it mean knowledge is relative to mind? There is even a third sense of "relative" suggested by his reference to absolutes. He could be saying knowledge is not absolute, but "relative."

But now Murphy may be thinking of relativity as something other than relatedness—though nowhere does he explicitly distinguish it from relatedness, and certainly he never calls attention to how the distinction might bear on objective relativism. He reiterates that relatedness is the basic fact about reality. But

> knowledge is compresence, interaction, and in such interaction mind is together with things from its own standpoint. Hence no mere registration of an external environment is to be expected, much less the fabrication of a new one.[33]

Murphy is aware now that relativism in the sense of an interaction of mind with things from its own standpoint is not the same as mere interaction or relatedness. It is the difference, he notes, between a two-term and a three-term relation. On the latter—"relativistic" —view, even illusion is not error:

> A further relation is introduced and we have to deal with the peculiarities of individual minds. But once more, *in that context* the given object is real, it is a fact about the world in its relation to a given mind and follows from the connections of that mind with the world.[34]

This suggests that the interaction or relatedness that is a relatedness to mind (relativism) is not the same as the interaction or relatedness between other things (relatedness). Murphy criticizes Alexander, in fact, for restricting the knowledge relation to one of "mere contemplation," a "simple occupation" that makes no difference:

> Mind is merely 'together' with things in an external fashion and such 'compresence' is taken to be the essence of knowledge. . . . If knowing be mere togetherness, then knowing adds nothing at all to the pre-existing reality which is simply alongside it.[35]

Murphy expanded this idea in a defense of objective relativism against Lovejoy's attacks, but the ambiguity in his use of "relativity" continued. Objective relativism, he said, was the theory

[32] A. E. Murphy, "Alexander's Metaphysic of Space-Time," *The Monist*, Vol. XXXVIII, January, 1928, p. 22.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 23–24.

[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 36–37.

that recognized the distinctness of the plurality of types of objects within a single world of interacting events,

> each quite real and ultimate in its own kind, which grounded our knowledge of them in the occurrent reality of the perceptual situation itself and which discovered in the effective relatedness of objects a valid clue to their objective nature.[36]

In the following year, Murphy wrote an introduction for G. H. Mead's *The Philosophy of the Present* in which it is quite apparent that the relativity being referred to is now relativism:

> The various theories of knowledge that were phases of the 'revolt against dualism' all sought to objectify those features of experience which a dualistic philosophy had regarded as merely subjective. This meant that what had previously been allocated to 'mind' must now find its place in 'nature' and that nature must be reconstructed accordingly. And finally, in the extension of relativity to the objective world, a criticism was required of the notions of 'perspective,' 'time-system,' 'sociality' and the like, in order to show how these notions, purified of their merely subjective connotations, could take their place in a system of categories as the pervasive characters of reality.[37]

Later, Murphy explicitly identified this with the relativism of objective relativism when he looked back upon the use of the name in academic discussions as a means of stressing

> the fact that the experienced world is *at once* in some of its major features dependent on and conditioned by the special relations in which sentient (and more particularly human) organisms stand to their environment *and also* a direct presentation of that environment itself, or the order of natural events, as it is under such conditions.[38]

III

It is clear, then, that objective relativism was not only a critique of bifurcation, but also an alternative theory to it. It included a theory of the objectivity of relations and a view of the world as interrelated, but its unique contribution was its relativism. Murphy's failure to be specific as to what this was a relativism *of* or *to* tended to obscure the objective relativist critique of such ab-

[36] A. E. Murphy, "Mr. Lovejoy's Counter-Revolution," this JOURNAL, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3, January 29, 1931, p. 71.

[37] A. E. Murphy in the Introduction to G. H. Mead, *The Philosophy of The Present* (Chicago, The Open Court Publishing Co., 1932), p. xv. Murphy notes that Mead's philosophy of the present was an important contribution to objective relativism as a revolt against dualism. A more recent expression of this metaphysics of objective relativism is to be found in T. T. Lafferty, "The Metaphysical Status of Qualities," this JOURNAL, Vol. L, No. 11, May 21, 1953, pp. 313–328. See also C. W. Morris, *Six Theories of Mind* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1932), especially chapter 6.

[38] Murphy, "Dewey's Epistemology," p. 219.

stractions as "objectivity" and "subjectivity." It is not until this critique is seen that the "most original and most controversial" element that Murphy referred to is also seen: the union of the allegedly incompatible objectivity and relativity. (Actually this union would be more apparent had Murphy called it "objective subjectivism.") The question is, What is the exact nature of that union?

Numerous individuals generally identified as objective relativsts were, at one time or another, concerned with the objectivity of relations and the relatedness, or interrelatedness, of the world. But as that avowedly non-objective relativist, A. O. Lovejoy, indicated, objective relativism by no means had a monopoly on the view that relations are objective, or that existence is in some sense fundamentally related.[39] But often this concern led writers to identify it as objective relativism. Thus one of the earliest statements of the objectivity of relations—F. E. Abott's "Scientific Theism"—is called by Schneider "an excellent exposition of objective relativism."[40]

The critique of bifurcation in objective relativism certainly viewed relations as objectively real in opposition to the classical empiricist and 17th-century dualist notion that relations (and the qualities dependent on them) were apart from nature as products of an isolated mind. As one objective relativist pointed out, this was replaced by a non-bifurcated world of interrelated events "whose mutual influence determines their character."[41] This committed the objective relativist to the view that things can have different natures because they can be in different relations with other things, and that this possibility of different relations was an aspect of an ever-evolving plurality of worlds and processes.[42]

But something more is implied. Theories of objective relations and the interrelatedness of the world lead to relativism. In the late E. B. McGilvary's "Perspective Realism," Postulate 2 states:

> Every particular in the world is a member of a context of particulars and is what it is only because of its context; and every character any member has it has only by virtue of its relations to other members of that context.[43]

[39] Lovejoy, *The Revolt Against Dualism*, pp. 86–87.

[40] Herbert Schneider, *A History of American Philosophy* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1946), p. 326.

[41] S. P. Lamprecht, "Sense Qualities And Material Things," *Philosophical Review*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 1, January, 1929, p. 24.

[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 32–33.

[43] E. B. McGilvary, *Toward A Perspective Realism* (LaSalle, The Open Court Publishing Co., 1956), p. 17.

If this is so, something more is implied when the interaction of mind and nature is viewed as an instance of this interrelatedness:

> Not only are particulars in general found in contexts . . . but it is a familiar fact that many of their empirical characters vary with the varying relations in which they are found. The tables and chairs and trees and mountains we see have different seen shapes and sizes according to the distances and directions in which they stand to us.[44]

That this is something more than a suggestion of mere physical or bodily perspective or relativism is suggested in McGilvary's Postulate 3:

> In the world of nature any 'thing' at any time is, and is nothing but, the totality of the relational characters, experienced or not experienced, that the 'thing' has at that time in whatever relations it has at that time to other 'things.'[45]

In McGilvary's objective relativism, then, both relatedness and relativism are indicated when he refers to his "theory that everything in Nature is relative and that consciousness is one of the natural relations, occurring under natural conditions."[46]

By its theory of objective relations—or "universal objective relativity"—objective relativism "returned" man to nature. But if this is done, then surely it must follow that the old distinctions between subjectivity and objectivity disappear. Gone is the familiar bifurcation of qualities: for an objective relativist like McGilvary a "physical thing" is defined as

> nothing but the totality of the physical relational characters it has at that time, but this definition of a physical thing does not preclude such a thing from having other characters in whatever non-physical relation it stands at that time to other things . . . when some physical things come to stand in non-physical relations they acquired certain non-physical qualities in these latter relations. But these acquisitions were as natural under the conditions under which they arose as the previously existing physical things.[47]

The new acquisition McGilvary refers to is what once went by the name of "subjectivity" and was viewed as something to be avoided or perhaps even excluded (because unreal or non-existential). But it is a new element that expanded the physical world into the world of nature:

> With this expansion something new occurred but not a new world set over against the physical world with a gulf between the two. There is no such

[44] *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

[46] E. B. McGilvary, "Woodbridge's 'An Essay On Nature,'" this JOURNAL, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 6, March 13, 1941, p. 154.

[47] McGilvary, *Toward A Perspective Realism*, p. 177.

> gulf. Let us call what is new in this world the world of mind. . . . Mind is a physical organism when conscious. Thus the world of mind is not separated by a logically impassable gulf from the world of physics. The connection between the two consists in the fact that certain physical processes in physical organisms give rise to the epiphysical world of mind.[48]

Dewey said the same thing in his *Experience and Nature:*

> Philosophers, and strangely enough philosophers who call themselves realists, have constantly held that the traits which are characteristic of thinking, namely, uncertainty, ambiguity, alternatives, inquiring, search, selection, experimental reshaping of external conditions, do not possess the same existential character as do the objects of valid knowledge. They have denied that these traits are evidential of the character of the world within which thinking occurs . . . that such things are only personal or psychological in contrast with a world of objective nature . . . [But naturalistic metaphysics maintains that] The world must actually be such as to generate ignorance and inquiry; doubt and hypothesis, trial and temporal conclusion.[49]

But if we agree with this re-definition of "subjectivity"—the restoration of subjectivity to the same existential status as objectivity—then "objectivity" must also be re-defined. If, for example, subjectivity is as real as objectivity, then objectivity can no longer be thought of as the exclusive domain of reality. Lovejoy once claimed that the real issue between objective relativism and dualism was this: "can the things which are by both doctrines declared to be 'relative to percipient events' be considered 'objective.'"[50] The trouble was that a definition of what objective relativism meant by "objective" was needed. Indeed, Lovejoy felt that the objective relativist polemic had been "much facilitated" by its neglect in defining "objective" and "subjective."[51] While many have set forth new definitions of "subjectivity," few have explicitly proposed a new definition of "objectivity." Even those sympathetic to objective relativism (like Beck) often fail to see the full import of the objective relativist critique. Beck, to be sure, does note the importance of distinguishing between the "relation of an object to the perceiving person and its relation to other objects." The object's qualities, he says, depend not only on the "highly variable relation" to the perceiver, but also "upon its more stable relations to other objects in its context." This is, of course, the distinction between relativism and relatedness. But then Beck goes on to do the same thing many other relativists do: he plays down the relativism in favor of the relatedness. In

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 178.
[49] Dewey, *Eperience And Nature*, p. 69.
[50] Lovejoy, *The Revolt Against Dualism*, p. 90.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

fact, he identifies objective relativism with the latter more than with the former: "It is the emphasis upon the latter kind of relation, a relativity among objects, that gives this theory its name, *objective* relativism." [52]

The fact that the object's qualities depend both on its relativity to other objects and its relativity to perceivers is occasion for Beck to bring forth the primary and secondary qualities distinction. Qualities dependent upon the relation of an object to the nervous system and mind of the organism that responds to it are secondary qualities, and those that depend upon relation to other objects are primary. To be sure, Beck has not returned to the dualist position completely. Though the mind may be necessary to the emergence of a secondary quality, that quality is no more "in the mind" than the weight of an object is "in the earth." [53] The difference between the two is that the "most important kind of relativity in establishing the properties of an object" is "the relativity of one object to another, and not its relativity to us." [54]

It appears that Beck sees the critique of bifurcation in objective relativism, but he fails to see the new meanings—or suggested meanings—that objective relativists gave to objectivity and subjectivity. He doesn't specifically define these himself, but it is clear he is identifying the "objective" in objective relativism with relativity to objects, and this relativity is independent of mind. It would follow, then, that "objectivity" for Beck means independent of mind," and "subjectivity" means "dependent upon mind" —with the added proviso that this dependence does not involve anything like the second world of subjectivism. If I read Beck correctly, it appears he has failed to see—or to indicate—that objective relativism involves a *union* of objectivity and subjectivity (or relativity). For surely he must show how objective relativism makes sense if the "objective" in it means "independent of mind," and the "relativism" means "dependent on mind." It would therefore be meaningless for an objective relativist to make the distinction Beck does as to which relativity is the most important "in establishing the properties of an object." They are equally important.

Whatever Murphy means by his proposition that "In spite (or because) of such objectivity such happenings [the objective facts of the world of nature disclosed to us in perception] remain ulti-

[52] L. W. Beck, *Philosophic Inquiry; An Introduction to Philosophy* (New York, Prentice-Hall, 1952), p. 426.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 427.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 428.

mately and inescapably relative," there is a possibility that he is pointing to the ultimate inseparability of objectivity and relativity. If so—and I believe this is what Murphy referred to as the "most original and most controversial" element in objective relativism—then the relativism of objective relativism is at least as much responsible for its name as is its relatedness. Beck does see that the objective relativist insists upon subjectivity and objectivity having the same existential basis. But he does not see that the objective relativist also claims that objectivity no longer involves independence of mind; i.e., the *objectivity* is relative (or subjective).

That Beck may still be thinking of objectivity (and subjectivity) in terms of bifurcation is illustrated in his exposition of the objective relativist position on values. Beck claims that values are, for the objective relativist, distinctly dependent upon human need or interest. And then he quickly points out that being "relational" to a subject or person does not mean being subjective.[55] But the objective relativist claims that values *are* subjective—i.e., relativity *is* subjective. The objective relativist further claims that the obloquy and horror traditionally directed toward the subjective, when objectivity was equated with reality or perhaps truth, is unwarranted. The subjective (or relative) is something that must be taken account of not only in value situations, but in descriptive or factual situations as well. Just as we cannot fully interpret the value situation apart from questions of subjectivity (or relativity), so too must our interpretations of factual or descriptive situations include serious consideration of the subjective.

This brings up a second point about Beck's exposition of objective relativism. It is customary among relativists to claim a subjectivity or relativity for value but to disavow that there might be any such thing in the descriptive or factual. But the objective relativist would ask, Why is it that the subject or person must be taken account of in the first case, but not in the second? Does the person (or subjective) disappear, or hold itself in abeyance, or cancel itself out, or what? Can relativity to mind be confined to value? Put another way, Does being objective mean being independent of mind? The failure to distinguish relativism and relatedness in objective relativism enables the would-be relativist to have his relativity in both the value and descriptive or factual situations. But he is surely not the same kind of relativist in both cases.

But it must be admitted that objective relativists have not always been clear in their answers to these questions, and they have often raised more questions than they have solved. Clearly, the

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 213.

objective relativist is distinguished by his attempt to get all of the active mind, self, or person into all human situations without a return to the mentalism of idealism. Since so much of what dominates philosophizing today looks to Hume for its inspiration, this attempt is either considered subversive to empiricism, or it is conspicuous by its absence. But it is possible that this "de-personalized" philosophizing is on the wane. Even our analytic brethren in their preoccupation with language talk these days about the *use* of language, and not just language itself. Who knows but what some day they will agree that language—as well as meaning—exists only in the context of its being spoken and heard by—of all things—persons. And it is possible that objective relativism can still contribute to the philosophical rehabilitation of the person and his subjectivity without the gloom of Kierkegaard or the obscurity of Heidegger.

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INTERNATIONAL CONGRESSES AND INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS

THE Twelfth International Congress of Philosophy met in Venice and Padua on September 12–18, 1958.[1] It was possibly the largest philosophy assembly ever held, with over 1200 philosophers attending from 55 countries, including 98 Americans. The Congress was pervaded by considerable interest in what the large delegation from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe would say and do. There were 32 philosophers from the Soviet Union (more than expected) and well over 70 from Eastern Europe. It was the first International Congress in a long time that Russian philosophers were permitted to attend. They had not participated in the post-war years; and, as far as I can determine, not since the late twenties (although some did attend the International Congress of the Philosophy of Science in Zurich in 1954). There was some disappointment that the Chinese People's Republic did not allow a delegation to attend. The Communist government requested that no philosophers from Taiwan should be admitted; but the organiz-

[1] Other International Congresses held thus far have been: I, Paris, 1900; II, Geneva, 1904; III, Heidelberg, 1908; IV, Bologna, 1911; V, Naples, 1924; VI, Harvard, 1926; VII, Oxford, 1930; VIII, Prague, 1934; IX, Paris, 1937; X, Amsterdam, 1948; XI, Brussels, 1953.

The XIIIth Congress will be held in Mexico City in 1963.

ing committee could not agree to this condition, since invitations were to individuals and academic bodies, and not to governments. But at least at the start many philosophers were eager to have their first real contact with their Russian colleagues. As the Congress proceeded this enthusiasm was very much lessened, since the Russians adhered strictly to the party line and seemed to alternate between two postures—defensive or offensive, rarely relaxed. They appeared to be more intent on showing the advantages of dialectical materialism over other philosophies, such as mechanical materialism, than engaging in substantive philosophical inquiry; though their performances in the discussions were somewhat freer than their prepared papers, and they were evidently happy to be present. The philosophers from Eastern Europe on the whole were better received at the Congress, since they were somewhat more flexible to different viewpoints and more concerned with philosophy proper.

The Congress began with cordial welcoming ceremonies by our Italian hosts to San Marco and the lovely island of San Giorgio Maggiore where most of the meetings were held. At the main plenary sessions simultaneous translations were provided into five official languages of the Congress: Italian, English, French, German, Spanish. This led to some initial difficulty in regard to Russian, even though some Russian philosophers were able to deliver their papers in French. Fortunately one of the woman translators understood Russian, thus avoiding an international crisis. But the translation was only into German, which meant that all the other translations of Russian were third hand. Thus Russian was soon made an "unofficial" language of the Congress. The idea of simultaneous translation similar to that adopted at the U. N. was a good attempt to bridge the language barrier. In practice, however, there was much left to be desired, since many of the translations were mediocre, missing subtle distinctions. The result was that many of the Congress members turned off their radio earphones and took their chances with the unadulterated original.[2]

There were over 300 papers read at the Congress. These were presented in two different ways. First, there were some 100 papers,

[2] Daily communiqués were issued in several languages to provide continuity to the Congress, but the English version gave little help and was largely garbled as the following quotation from communiqué 12 reveals: "Prof. L. confirms the deficience of the Philosophy of Hegel and his neopositivistics, he proposes the elaboration of an axiologicamentical neuter conception that permits itself complete historical justification." . . . "The conference has been finished by Prof. G. thanking all the auditors who interfered during the discussion"!!

discussed at the large plenary sessions, on three major problems: (1) "Man and Nature"; (2) "Freedom and Value"; (3) "Logic, Language, and Communication." And second, there were some 200 papers on a variety of topics read at nine to eleven concurrent meetings. Here there were no simultaneous translations, although a translator was available to interpret questions and answers and, where called upon, to provide a brief (though frequently unintelligible) summary of the papers presented. In my case, I read a paper in English. Most of the people in the room were native disciples of Professor Maria Teresa Antonelli of Genoa. Many arrived late with her, gave her a rousing ovation ("Antonelli! Antonelli!"), and then followed her out. Apparently those who listened barely understood a word of my paper, even though a translated summary was provided. At these smaller meetings, generally Italians listened to Italians, Anglo-Americans to Anglo-Americans, Germans to Germans, and so on. It would, of course, have been difficult to arrange for complete translations; but the results, I fear, were at times cacophonic.

The plenary sessions were somewhat better organized. To facilitate discussion of the three major themes, ten representative philosophers were selected to give accounts of the present state of research and to state their own positions; and their papers were published beforehand. Having common themes for some meetings was, I think, a good procedure; though I heard Gilbert Ryle at a meeting of the International Institute of Philosophy complain about using "umbrella" titles such as "Man and Nature," or compelling philosophers to talk about questions that they are not very much interested in. But without a common platform, bedlam is apt to reign (as in the smaller meetings); and with it some basis (however loose) is provided for criticizing and comparing different points of view. "Umbrella" terms may stretch language at times; but they may prevent us from becoming "all wet"! To *most* of the Congress members one, and possibly all three, of the problems designated were considered of genuine philosophical significance. The major difficulty at the Congress was that there were too many papers at the plenary sessions, leaving little room for free give and take. In the future it might be wise to limit the number of papers here. I would also retain the principle of the smaller meetings, though. They do put us in contact with many philosophical developments ("let a hundred flowers bloom"!); and there is the practical difficulty that many philosophers might not be given expenses to journey the distance if they were unable to read a paper.

So much for the mechanics of the Congress. Was there any-

thing of philosophical significance? It is difficult to summarize what transpired at the smaller meetings. I will, however, venture my over-all impressions and judgments of the Congress, as gained from the plenary meetings and from discussions with colleagues about the Congress.

The first meeting of the Congress on "Man and Nature," in presenting three prominent positions, was fairly representative of the state of philosophy in the world today. Philipp Frank could not attend personally, but his paper, "Present Role of Science," argued that twentieth-century science has not itself brought about any change in our concepts of man and nature; rather, political and religious biases have determined which factors were to be selected from science in order to support *a priori* creeds and ideals of human society. Both spiritualists and materialists at the Congress objected vigorously to Frank's claim that recent physics has not enabled us to deduce strictly a set of philosophical conclusions, and that there is an inherent circularity at work when antagonistic philosophers infer opposite philosophical and moral conclusions.

Father J. B. Lotz expressed the view of much continental and religious existentialism when he argued that man is a "spiritual" being who transcends the empirical world of things, and who by means of judgment can take the first step beyond to the supersensual. His paper evoked favorable comments from the Thomists and metaphysicians present. Herbert W. Schneider's claim that existentialism is a "crisis philosophy" symptomatic of the times, and a result of our loss of faith in social reform, was more appreciated by critics of existentialism.

A paper that provoked a great deal of discussion was that by Academician M. B. Mitin of the Soviet Union. Mitin took the usual orthodox Marxist position, arguing that labor or production is the essential means by which man is related to nature, since man acts upon nature and changes it. But production is a function of the forces and social relations of production. These in turn influence the level of human development. The obligation for man, according to Mitin, is to increase the forces of production and technology, and to create a "rational" and "equitable" social system (such as has been established in the Soviet Union). Mitin's attack on "Malthusian doctrines," which deny that mankind can overcome any gap between population and food supply, raised the most heated controversy. His claim that "life on the earth could be interesting and full for an unlimited number of people" was criticized in a paper by Sidney Hook (which in his absence was read by Professor Antony Flew of Great Britain). Hook claimed that in the long

run the "population bomb" might be more dangerous to humanity than the hydrogen bomb, and he went on to criticize the political policies of the Soviet Union. This was all that the Soviet bloc needed; and in the ensuing discussion speaker after speaker singled out Hook for special criticism. Michel Dynnyk claimed that communist society was more democratic than Western society and he accused Hook of injecting non-philosophical political controvery into the meeting. He excoriated Hook (and by indirection America) for minimising the horrors of the H-bomb!—a remark which compelled the Chairman of the session, Helmut Kuhn, to intervene. However *non-sequitur* all these expressions of nationalistic emotion were, they could not be eliminated, and continually cropped up at subsequent meetings; as, for example, the concluding remark of a Russian philosopher, that although he disagreed with the philosophical theories of Sartre and Russell, he approved of them as men of peace!

In the symposium "Freedom and Value," Miguel Reale reviewed recent views on the subject and suggested that there seems to be a return to the "depths of the self" and of consciousness in order to discover the source of freedom and value. Alois Dempf examined post-Kantian and contemporary views on the autonomy and heteronomy of freedom and value, suggesting that phenomenology today provides a promising philosophy of liberty and value. Adolfo Muñoz-Alonso maintained that the concepts of freedom and value are intelligible only in conjunction. "Freedom is nothing but the assertion of human value" connecting potential being with ought to be; but values themselves require free consciousness.

Interestingly, the above three papers were condemned by the Italian Communist newspaper, *L'Unità* (Tuesday, September 16), for attempting to treat freedom and value as simple deductions from metaphysical systems. The views of Richard McKeon evoked the comment "più interessante," apparently because McKeon dealt with what were considered to be "real" problems (despite his sharp criticism of the Communist position). McKeon related value ("approbation," "imputation," "accountability"), freedom, and responsibility to social and cultural problems, and to the search for common values within pluralistic contexts. His description of three types of philosophical inquiry was especially apropos to the Congress: (1) there are those philosophical inquiries which enter into the dialogue at hand and discuss the issues raised; (2) there are those that begin anew within their own position and are in effect "crossed monologues"; (3) there are those which enter into "controversy" by ignoring the arguments and indulging instead in

characterization of persons holding opposite positions. Unfortunately, all too many of the performances at this Congress were of the last two varieties. (One paper that stood out and is worth noting was that by T. Alisjahbana of Indonesia).

The third topic of the Congress, "Logic, Language, and Communication," reflected the interests of positivists and analytic philosophers who were generally unhappy with everything that had gone on before. It also showed that real progress is sometimes possible without party labels or identifications. For example, there seems to be a good deal of interest in such topics in Italy (Gustav Bergmann believes that a philosophical renaissance is going on among younger Italian philosophers); the Polish delegates in particular made excellent contributions here; and among the Russians there seemed to be more evidence of new interest and greater flexibility in logic (an appraisal which Professor John Somerville, just returning from long study in the Soviet Union, substantiates). Perhaps this is because ideological commitments are less clearly defined in this area than elsewhere.

At this third session, however, the familiar empiricist versus existentialist and metaphysical gulf still was evident. My colleague, T. Foster Lindley, analyzes the situation this way: it is a mistake to say that the average British analysts *scorn* Continental philosophy—they merely *ignore* it. Aimé Forest delivered a paper, "La Communication," which was typical of much contemporary continental thought. Communication was presented as the principle of "spiritual intersubjectivity" which enables us to share a "spiritual world" in common. But there was little if any common sympathy or communication between Forest's approach and the analysts on the platform.

Ch. Perelman of Belgium read a paper which criticized formal logicians for seeking to construct artificial languages without considering underlying ontological and epistemological presuppositions. Perelman argued that the ideal of such formal logic breaks down, since it is unable to deal with natural languages, imperatives, and other modes of discourse. Although formal logic has made extraordinary progress, it is necessary, he claimed, to enlarge its perspective and to investigate other forms of proof and argument, such as those emphasized in the sciences, philosophy, and law.

As was inevitable, Anglo-American philosophers seemed most interested in Ayer's paper, "Meaning and Intentionality." Here Ayer suggested a behavioral theory of meaning. He argued that, since Wittgenstein, we must reject the descriptive model of mean-

ing, even for proper names. Moreover, Platonism, idealism, Carnap's "formal mode of speech," and the causal theory all fail in their accounts of meaning. Instead, Ayer analyzed meaning in terms of "non-intentional" belief, and suggested a pragmatic formula for meaning: "A believes that p if and only if A is disposed to behave in a way that is appropriate if and only if p." Here A's behavior must be appropriate *for him* (the general body of his beliefs, his special circumstances and desires). The remarks of Max Black, Alonzo Church, and Brand Blanshard, among others, directed largely at Ayer, led him to qualify and perhaps abandon his initial suggestion.

The last day of the Congress was held in Padua, historically the great center for Aristotelian studies, where Gilson, Randall, Dynnyk, and others read papers in this general field. Here the "Istituto Aristotelico Padovano-Columbiano" was founded, with the hope expressed that contacts with other American universities might be established.

One clear conclusion that was demonstrated by this Congress is that histories of philosophy can no longer be written as Western philosophy—perhaps because the Orient has taken our philosophical heritage, along with our scienee, technology, politics, and economics and we have become interested in theirs. Marxism is after all a Western product, even though it may be geographically dominant in the "East." There is now for the first time a common body of problems and concepts and a common history of philosophy. It is true that philosophy frequently develops in terms of schools and traditions, each becoming more specialized; there have been and are *literatures* of philosophy. Philosophers all too often concentrate their research on what others in the *same* school, tradition, or branch do—positivists read and write for positivists, Marxists for Marxists, Thomists for Thomists, idealists for idealists. Yet increasingly today we have the opportunity of breaking out by constant contact with the wider philosophical community. There are, of course, difficult barriers of language and tradition. But the scientific community has been able to overcome fragmentation and today constitutes a world community. Scientists have been able to agree on their method, philosophers not. Yet we philosophers have always prided ourselves on our universality. May the same thing be true of philosophy, as of science? Philosophy, unlike science, feeds in large part on criticism; yet common advance on some mutual problems would be desirable.

The "objectivist" in philosophy might consider the XIIth International Congress of Philosophy a failure. Alas, philosophers

are only human, and they reflect most of the passions and prejudices of their fellow men. What this Congress showed was the sway of nationalisms, loyalties, and faiths over philosophers. The philosophers from the Soviet bloc were Marxist-Leninist. You could, for example, usually detect that a German philosopher (intense and polemical as a rule) was from East Germany (Marxist) rather than West Germany (Heideggerish and Husserlish). On the other side, the Thomist bloc could be easily identified; it remained steadfastly loyal to Rome. The positivists were true to their platform—they could not understand why other philosophers should be concerned with "trivial" matters and continue in self-delusion. The metaphysicians were in principle perplexed that their critics were so narrow and specialized, and not working on the "important" problems. South American and Spanish philosophers were generally existentialist, idealist, Kantian, Thomist. British philosophers remained purist, insulated, and looked down their razor blades at un-British goings-on. Anglo-American philosophers were at odds with continental existentialists and metaphysicians. I do think, however (and I hope that I shall not be accused of nationalistic bias), that American philosophers generally were fairer and more open-minded to various points of view than many others—except, that is, in regard to Marxist scholarship, which is not considered respectable by the majority of Americans, though it is held in high esteem elsewhere. The East-West deadlock in politics apparently extends to philosophy too. And one feels that many philosophers were frequently more worried about what the folks at home would say than about the issues before them. Persuasion, sermonizing, emotional rhetoric were all too often present.

Can anyone rise above these special commitments and loyalties? French philosophy, though continental and existentialist, was overly sophisticated in its intellectualism, and, in Randall's words, "provincial" in its claim to universality. At present, I believe that only among the Asian philosophers, particularly those from India, did I find an open mind, a willingness to learn and grow. But perhaps it is because India is relatively neutral and, as an Indian colleague, P. R. Damle, explained to me, still searching for a clear definition of itself for the future.

All this suggests something that we do not like to admit to ourselves—yet, if this Congress is an indication, we must—that all too often there are *extra*-philosophical reasons and causes for our holding our positions, especially in regard to unexamined assumptions and problems. Value choices lie at the very foundations of

philosophical inquiry, and these values are the products of many political, social, and cultural influences.

Yet surely the picture is not all bleak. There have always been schools of philosophy and *isms*. Since philosophical perspectives are frequently related to the problems men face in their diverse situations, one might expect a variety of nationalisms, too.

In the broadest sense the XIIth International Congress of Philosophy did accomplish its objective by providing an intellectual meeting ground for all points of view. It is doubtful if philosophical research was significantly advanced by this meeting, or if many came away with new insights, or arguments that they were unaware of before. Indeed, most of the papers were too general and lacked subtlety. Moreover, the temptations of sightseeing in charming Venice, the International Art exhibit, the Festival of Contemporary Music, the International Cinema showing, the excursion to the islands of the estuary, audience with the Pope at Rome, the missed boats and meetings, all tended to interfere, though in a delightful way, with the business of philosophy. At least this Congress did open doors hitherto shut. It did, with all of the international tensions in the background, provide some ground for communication, particularly between East and West; and it did provide the rather intangible, yet solid, value of face-to-face meetings with philosophers who prior to this were known only in print, and whose words now became flesh. Moreover, provisions for increased international contacts were strengthened, such as the development of working relations between the University of Padua and American institutions, and the contribution this year by the Russians to the *Bibliography of Philosophy* and the *Chroniques*.

May we, then, say that for the first time the twentieth century sees the beginning of a world philosophical community? Not that there is a unified view, nor even widespread philosophical agreement; but a world philosophy in the sense that there are *no longer isolated pockets* of philosophical development (such as the long standing gulf that existed between Oriental and Western philosophy); and that what happens in one place sooner or later is bound to have an influence elsewhere. If this is the case, then not merely are International Philosophy Congresses among the most important that we can attend; they are a vital necessity. Even if one has no patience with other isms, it is important to encounter them head on, to see that they exist, and to recognize the problem. The main challenge is that we further genuine philosophical inquiry rather than "crossed monologues" or mere "controversy"; and that we avoid reading other philosophers out of the "party" or the pro-

fession. Such a common venture requires the establishment of at least two conditions: first, a social and political basis for free inquiry; and second, mutual respect within philosophy itself for different points of view.

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ON OBJECTIVE MODES

OBJECTS are generally thought of as existent beings or "bodies" or something analogous. For some obscure reason, bodies have received less critical attention than have objects, but there are still innumerable cases in which the existential mode of an object is less clear than that of a body. I suspect that "being an object" is now generally regarded as a definite mode of being and that it is consequently taken for granted, just as it seems to be taken for granted today that the world is composed of facts. Yet no one has told us clearly what objects or facts actually are. Objects are commonly taken to be the warehouses for the raw materials of knowledge. It is easy enough to say with Kant that "an object is given us by experience," but as soon as we begin to think about an object we are confronted with what H. H. Price has well termed "cognition of the absent." Hence we have the old problem facing us that, although "*by*" experience we know the absent things, "*in*" experience something must be given or manifest. Or, to refer again to Kant, in knowledge there is "receptivity" as well as "spontaneity in the production of conceptions"; "in receptivity the object is given to us" (Pt. II, Transcendental Logic, 1). How can we approach a given object without rendering it absent? To answer this question, let me distinguish the various modes in which objects may be said to be by showing how these modes arise from different approaches to things.

1. The negative approach to things. The venerable Berkeley writes: "It is agreed on all hands that the *qualities* or *modes* of things do never really exist each of them by itself, and separated from all others, but are mixed, as it were, and blended together, several in the same object" (*Principles of Human Knowledge,* Introduction, § 7). Let us refer to this mixed state in which the qualities-of-the-thing "really" exist as *the mode of the whole.* This mode of an object does not arise from our knowledge of it, but from our knowledge of how it becomes manifest. The qualities, which we experience singly, repose safely and securely in the object re-

gardless of where and how they may be discovered in sense. Hence, we really need not know all of an object's qualities in order to have an object given to us. The object is not really given as a "bundle" but as a whole which "possesses" qualities in a way in which we cannot possess them.

A blind man may have a round apple in his hand and find it sweet in the eating, but he does not have or eat a red apple, though the vender sold him a round, red, sweet apple. Suppose he could not eat it, nor smell it, nor handle it, how would he "have" it? The "very" apple would escape him altogether. The thing would be absent. However, could he but smell it, an apple as a whole would be "there," provided that he knew the smell-of-an-apple.

In a grocery store I come upon a new food, wrapped in foil, its qualities well concealed; yet there it is on the food shelf, an unknown food waiting to be known. It is certainly more of a whole then than after I have known it.

An inquisitive child, finding itself with its father in a big, busy, building, asks "What is all this?" "A bank" or "a railroad station" replies the father. It may be long before the child will come to know the intricacies of banking and railroad travel, yet the child now knows that "all this" unintelligible confusion as a whole has a name and is known by its father as a unity.

Thus whole objects are undoubtedly given to us, but when we approach them cautiously by their qualities in order to find out *how* they possess them, we are apt to get a negative result. For objects do not possess qualities in the same way in which we get them. Consequently, the *very* object, in its mode of wholeness or unity, escapes us. The inevitable duality in thinking thus obscures the whole object to us. We must distinguish the snow from the white, soft, etc. What remains of the snow when its properties are gone? Nothing for us, perhaps. But those who infer that the very object is merely the sum total of its manifestations are not telling the whole empirical truth. A "bundle of properties" does not "really" *constitute* an object. An object thus constituted would be as unreal as "abstract ideas" were for Berkeley. But despite our growing knowledge of an object, or rather because of our thinking thoroughly about it, the very object baffles us; its existential mode seems to be in its properties and not in its mode of wholeness. The given source of our knowledge remains a "mystery."

When we say, "An apple is (or equals) the sum of its red, round, sweet, etc.," the verb does not assert the identity of subject and predicate. An apple means, produces, manifests, appears as

round, red, sweet, etc. But the predicates do not constitute the object which the subject denotes. Hence we must remember that when we think or speak of a thing as "having" certain qualities or properties, or when we speak of it as devoid of all its attributes, we nevertheless do not imply that the thing *is* devoid of its attributes, nor that the "having" is constitutive of the thing's being in its primary mode of wholeness. But this leaves us with the uncomfortable admission that we cannot define the way the thing *has* its attributes. This is the outcome of the negative approach to things.

2. *The Mode of Diversity of Things.* This leads to another approach to things, for things are manifested to us as diversifications in "the Whole of things." A thing comes to us as a unity amid many different things. It is through conceptual thought that things are manifested as individuals within a Whole of diversified individuals. Man has no way of thinking about the Whole conceptually any more than he can think about a particular thing as an individual perceptually. The mode of the Whole arises out of the mode of objects as individual wholes. Conceptually, known things exist as particulars or individuals in the unknown Whole of diversified existence. Any representative of a class or category of things (a mountain, river, house, town, sun) is also a phase of the Whole. Hence the Whole can be known only through its phases, but these phases or particulars are more than parts; they are wholes manifesting a Whole.

The core of all problems of method is the problem of the unity of the object. This unity, though it is "given," cannot be known by relating a thing to its qualities or properties. I can never conceive an orange by beginning with the color, orange, and adding other properties of the thing, orange. The orange is manifested as a *very* object only when brought into relations, through speech or conception, with other things. The diversity of things is given in the Whole and the method of knowing things by distinguishing them from each other is a positive approach to the particularity or individuality of objects, since it does not rest entirely on definition but on extensive analysis and classification.

3. *The Mode of Expediency.* From this a bolder approach to things is derived, that all things are expedients of the whole in order to expedite the processes of change in nature. This approach admits that the nature of things is unknown, since the Whole is unmanifest; but it looks forward to an increasing knowledge of the ways in which things function as wholes among other wholes, a knowledge of expediency among things.

There must be an unknown mode of things which man seeks to penetrate and in the face of which man often finds himself baffled. Hence the significance of knowing the best method of inquiry: it becomes clear that the method should be such that it can be employed for gaining *new* knowledge. Too many methods are merely ways of explaining what is already known. Hence the basic rule of method should be: objects should be known in such a way that what is known serves as a springboard or expediter for conquests into the unknown.

From this point of view, it is impossible to know what things "really" are, except that they are expedients of the whole. What we know should be expeditious. The givenness of things, not being cognitive, is no help in this enterprise. What makes new discoveries expedient or expeditious is the discovery of ways in which things work together or expedite each other. More knowledge of objective expediency will give us not only a better knowledge of how a given thing functions, changes, relates itself to others, but may give us further clues about the ways in which expedients may manifest the nature of the now unknown Whole. Only by accepting this bold approach to things can some genuine progress be made in man's efforts to gain constantly new knowledge concerning the true mode of things.

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ON THE INTENTIONAL AMBIGUITY OF HEIDEGGER'S METAPHYSICS

THE sequence of questions is itself a mode of thinking which, instead of supplying concepts merely, feels and tests itself as a new mode of relationship to Being." In this concluding sentence of the note which he has appended to *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit,* Heidegger echoes with special stress the intentional ambiguity which vibrates so plangently through his ontology; the penultimate statement which prepares us for this enigmatic "conclusion," which can be designated as such only from its terminal position, is the admission that, though the line of thought in *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* follows to all appearance the road of metaphysics, simultaneously, in its decisive steps, it effects a change in the direction of the inquiry, a change really belonging to the conquest (*Überwindung*) of metaphysics. This confession that traditional metaphysics and the Heideggerian sequence of questions progress along

separate routes reveals that, while Heidegger has chosen to embody his mental activity in the form of metaphysical inquiry, his esoteric aim is actually to bypass philosophy entirely by "revealing," as he describes it, "the unhidden truth." Heidegger has evaluated all Western European history as "concealing of Being as such" and as "decline of metaphysics"; but this decline of metaphysics is exacerbated rather than palliated by the Heideggerian ontology itself, which demotes metaphysics from the science of first principles of being and knowledge to a mere sequence of questions, antecedently eviscerated of any potential solution and deriving their force from the very fact that they can never be answered. The task of philosophical inquiry, according to the Heideggerian hermeneutics, is merely to propound insoluble problems and to heighten the mystery surrounding Being: every question is, in a sense, its own answer rather than the initial step towards investigation. "All questions that do justice to the subject are themselves bridges to their own answering. Essential answers are always but the last step in our questioning. . . . Hence even the most genuine question is never stilled by the answer found." Metaphysics itself is, then, *aufgehoben*. Its task is to conquer itself.

Moreover, the very Heideggerian style itself is an element in the strategy which directs itself towards the conquest of metaphysics: by the circumlocutions, redundancies, and neologisms which Heidegger deploys, we are brought to realize that he demands the dismissal of reason in order to make possible the "thinking" of Being as such. Until we realize that Heidegger intends to leave all logic behind him in his march towards the conquest of metaphysics along the road that is only apparently that of metaphysics, we shall be unable to grasp the fact that his ambiguities and potentialities of alternative interpretations are deliberate obfuscations exactly co-extensive with his intentions, and not clumsy approximations imposed on him by the inadequacies of philosophical language. When we contemplate the works of Heidegger, we must keep in mind the image of a priest, the guardian of an archaic temple, whose utterances are the "dictating of Being as such." Plato had thought that philosophy begins in wonder, but Heidegger has decided that it ends there. Its highest glory is to display originality of asking before disappearing into one of the "essential theaters of speechlessness."

The sequence of questions through which Heidegger leads us is, as the Zen Buddhist *Koan* expresses it, the sound of one hand clapping; in this progression our mind has played the part of a dynamite cap which destroys itself by liberating the hitherto merely

potential energy which flows from the revelation of the unhidden, the experience of Being, "that most mysterious of all possibilities." "Nothing is the source of negation, not the other way around. If this breaks the sovereignty of reason in the field of inquiry into Nothing and Being, then the fate of the rule of 'logic' in philosophy is also decided. The very idea of 'logic' disintegrates in the vortex of a more original questioning." The idea of metaphysics also disintegrates in this punishing maelstrom of original questioning, and, clinging to its scattered wreckage, we are left adrift far out over the Kierkegaardian sea—with no wings of faith, however, with which to take flight into dogmatic safety. Or we might say that, bereft of protective concepts and customary knowledge which acts as a shell protecting us from the full force of the realization of our contingency, we at last face Being, rushing towards us through the open, like the tiger upon the defenseless hunter who has just discovered, standing as he does in the path of the oncoming beast, that the last bullet in his rifle has been spent. "The clear courage for essential dread guarantees that most mysterious of all possibilities: the experience of Being. For close to essential dread, in the terror of the abyss, dwells awe."

But, granting that Heidegger is a mystic more concerned with demolishing than with manufacturing intellectual concepts, why does his mental activity take the form of metaphysical meditation? In the first place, the whole of Heidegger's work might plausibly be interpreted as an answer to the question which he himself puts to his academic colleagues in *Was ist Metaphysik?:* "What essential things are happening to us in the foundations of our existence, now that science has become our passion?" Heidegger's answer is a prolonged protest against the current "disrupted multiplicity of disciplines" which are "held together by the technical organizations of the Universities and their faculties, and maintained as a unit of meaning by the practical aims of those faculties." Accordingly, Heidegger represents the task of contemporary metaphysics to be that of pointing out what he conceives to have been lost by this emphasis on the region of what man can touch and control and by his taking his directives from the sphere of practical plans and requirements.

But in order to draw attention to these dangers of the multitude of fragmentary scientific disciplines, Heidegger himself has been compelled to outfit his thoughts in the garments of a respectable discipline to gain for them the prestige automatically attendant upon any "scientific" exposition in our day and to minimize the neglect which he might feel they would almost certainly encounter

if they were not clearly recognizable among his colleagues as duly certified and approved segments of scientific reality. Thus the very conditions for the acceptance of his thought are the very grounds of its obscurity and intentional ambiguity. This unavoidable obscurity which the hegemony of the scientific outlook imposes upon the expression of Heidegger's insights is paralleled in the history of philosophy by the case of another thinker whom the demands of the dominant presuppositions of his time compelled to use terminology foreign to his thought: Spinoza, who clothed an essentially modern and naturalistic outlook in the fashions of a current scholasticism. In both the case of Spinoza and Heidegger, the antagonism of form and content, imposed by the external philosophical environment, has given rise to a wide variety of mutually contradictory interpretations.

These conflicting interpretations of the Heideggerian ontology might be reconciled once and for all if it were recognized that beneath the thin mask of philosophical intellectualism in his work is hidden the visage of a faith that assumes axiomatically that the totality-of-all-that-is is absolutely and irremediably opaque to the human intellect. If Heidegger's fundamental contention is that the heart of Being is an impenetrable mystery, and that the highest task of metaphysics is to feel this emotionally as well as know it intellectually, then it is easy to discard the forced classification of him as a philosopher in the mainstream of modern western thought and to recognize him as a speculative mystic in the line of Jacob Boehme, Meister Eckhart, and the Zen Masters.

As a mystic, Heidegger's success in communicating his insights is largely dependent upon the susceptibilities of the reader and, perhaps, in the case of some readers already well prepared in the field of mystical exegesis, upon convincing those that remember his association with early National Socialism in his country that his antagonism to rational metaphysics is an outgrowth of his mysticism rather than his mysticism being an outgrowth of his antagonism towards rational metaphysics. As a philosopher, however, his work is a lasting monument to the network of contradictions and obvious absurdities into which a metaphysician wanders when he refuses to heed Wittgenstein's minatory jibe that whatever we *cannot* talk about, we *must* not talk about. Poetry may be, as Heidegger contends, as fundamental as metaphysics, but mystical poetry and rational metaphysics are not identical, as Heidegger has tried to make them. Heidegger's "new mode of relationship to Being" in which his sequence of questions terminates is as old as the *via negativa* and the ascesis of mystical devotees in every age and country;

what is new is the attempt, due to the scientific preoccupations of our period, to bring it to our attention through media which demand every quality which is an obstacle to its realization.

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NOTE ON FALSE PREMISES AND TRUE CONCLUSIONS

IT is apparently widely believed among teachers of logic and even by some authors of texts that the following kind of argument satisfactorily exemplifies a valid syllogism with false premises and a true conclusion:

All fish fly.
All robins are fish.
Therefore, all robins fly.[1]

The term *therefore,* however, indicates that the conclusion is asserted to be true on the basis of a formal relationship to premises which are also asserted to be true. But how can one logically assert the premises of an argument advanced as having false premises? If the premises are false, they must be meaningful (unlike "All M is P, All S is M; therefore All S is P," in which, since symbols replace meaningful terms, it makes no sense to call premises or conclusion true or false). But if the premises are meaningful and false, then the truth of the conclusion cannot be inferred from them, although the use of *therefore* implicitly makes this claim. A valid argument establishes the truth of its conclusion if its premises are true; it cannot establish its conclusion on the basis of premises asserted to be false or on the basis of premises asserted to be true and false. (It is not necessarily illogical to assert false premises, since one may be mistaken or may wish to deceive, but it is illogical to assert that one's premises are false.) It is correct, of course, to say, " 'All fish fly and all robins are fish' *implies* 'all robins fly.' " But here neither "premises" nor "conclusion" are asserted.

The apparent difficulty seems to be a confusion about the function of the syllogism. If the syllogism is regarded as a mere form of implication, then questions of truth and falsity do not arise. But whenever the syllogism is regarded as a means of establishing

[1] Johnstone, H. W., Jr., *Elementary Deductive Logic,* N. Y., 1954, p. 36.

a true conclusion, i.e., whenever a connective like *therefore* is employed, the *form* may be "valid," but an assertion that the premises are false contradicts the implicit assertion that they are true. In all such cases, when the conclusion is asserted, its truth must be independently known. Similar considerations apply to arguments generally, if "argument" is defined as a set of propositions, one of which, the conclusion, is asserted on the basis of evidence asserted in other propositions of the set.

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